

By: Giddings

H.B. No. 609

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to tuition rebate incentives for persons who complete certain degree and certificate programs without excessive credit hours.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 54.0065, Education Code, is amended by amending Subsections (a)-(f) and (h) and adding Subsections (a-1), (a-2), and (h-1) to read as follows:

(a) In this section:

(1) "Coordinating board" means the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

(2) "General academic teaching institution," "public junior college," and "public technical institute" have the meanings assigned by Section 61.003.

(a-1) A qualified student at a general academic teaching institution is eligible for a rebate of a portion of the undergraduate tuition the student has paid if the student:

(1) is awarded a baccalaureate degree from the [~~a general academic teaching~~] institution; and

(2) has attempted no more than three hours in excess of the minimum number of semester credit hours required to complete the degree, including:

(A) transfer credits; and

(B) course credit earned exclusively by

1 examination, except that, for purposes of this subsection, only the
2 number of semester credit hours earned exclusively by examination
3 in excess of nine semester credit hours is treated as hours
4 attempted.

5 (a-2) A qualified student at a public junior college, public
6 technical institute, or general academic teaching institution that
7 offers only freshman-level and sophomore-level courses is eligible
8 for a rebate of a portion of the undergraduate tuition the student
9 has paid if the student:

10 (1) is awarded an associate degree or other degree or
11 certificate in a program that requires at least 60 semester credit
12 hours; and

13 (2) has attempted no more than three hours in excess of
14 the minimum number of semester credit hours required to complete
15 the degree or certificate, including transfer credits and course
16 credit earned exclusively by examination.

17 (b) The amount of tuition to be rebated to a student under
18 Subsection (a-1) [~~this section~~] is \$1,000 and the amount of tuition
19 to be rebated to a student under Subsection (c) is \$500, unless the
20 total amount of undergraduate tuition paid by the student to the
21 institution of higher education awarding the degree or certificate
22 was less than that amount [~~\$1,000~~], in which event the amount of
23 tuition to be rebated is an amount equal to the amount of
24 undergraduate tuition paid by the student to the institution.
25 However, a student who paid the institution awarding the degree or
26 certificate an amount of undergraduate tuition less than the
27 applicable rebate amount specified by this subsection [~~\$1,000~~] may

1 qualify for an increase in the amount of the rebate, not to exceed a
2 total rebate in the applicable amount specified by this subsection
3 ~~[of \$1,000]~~, for any amount of undergraduate tuition the student
4 paid to other institutions of higher education by providing the
5 institution with proof of the total amount of that tuition paid to
6 other institutions of higher education.

7 (c) A student who has transferred from another institution
8 of higher education shall provide the institution awarding the
9 degree or certificate an official transcript from each institution
10 attended by the student in order that the total number of hours
11 attempted by the student can be verified.

12 (d) To qualify for a rebate under this section, the student
13 must have been a resident of this state and entitled to pay tuition
14 at the rate provided by this chapter for a resident student at all
15 times while pursuing the degree or certificate.

16 (e) All institutions of higher education shall notify each
17 first-time freshman student of the tuition rebate program under
18 this section.

19 (f) The institution awarding the degree or certificate
20 shall pay the rebate under this section from local funds.

21 (h) The legislature shall account in the General
22 Appropriations Act for the rebates authorized by this section to an
23 institution other than a public junior college in a way that
24 provides a corresponding increase in the general revenue funds
25 appropriated to the institution. It is the intent of the
26 legislature that rebates authorized by this section shall be
27 financed by savings to the state resulting from reductions in the

1 number of courses taken by undergraduate students.

2 (h-1) In addition to the amount appropriated for allocation
3 to public junior colleges under Section 130.003, the legislature
4 shall appropriate an amount sufficient to reimburse each public
5 junior college for any rebates paid by the college under this
6 section in the period used to determine the contact hours for the
7 allocation under Section 130.003. The coordinating board shall
8 transfer the appropriate portion of the amount appropriated under
9 this subsection to each public junior college in the same manner as
10 the coordinating board transfers money allocated to the college
11 under Section 130.003.

12 SECTION 2. The change in law made by this Act applies only
13 to a person who receives an associate degree or other degree or
14 certificate from a public junior college, public technical
15 institute, or general academic teaching institution that offers
16 only freshman-level and sophomore-level courses on or after the
17 effective date of this Act.

18 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2005.